

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-05

CCO-00 ACDA-05 OMB-01 CU-02 SCCT-01 /073 W

----- 044901

O R 041315Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3786

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T ALGIERS 0278

TUNIS FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AG, US, ASEC

SUBJ: DEMONSTRATION AT EMBASSY ALGIERS: STATUS REPORT AND
OVSERVATIONS

1. SUMMARY: DEMONSTRATION AGAINST EMBASSY DID NOT
MATERIALIZE FEB 3 BUT POLICE HAVE RETURNED FEB 4. FOREIGN
MINISTRY PROFESSES BELIEVE THIS ROUTINE PRECAUTIONARY
MEASURE AND WE KEEPING EMBASSY OPEN ON MINISTRY'S ADVICE.
WE TEND TO BELIEVE APPARENTLY PLANNED DEMONSTRATION TO BE GOA
INSPIRED AND SUSPECT ITS DELAY RESULT OF INTRA-REGIME
DISAGREEMENT OR ADMINISTRATIVE MIXUP. HOWEVER,
POSSIBILITY GOA SEEKING PROTECT US FROM TERRORIST ATTACK
CANNOT BE RULED OUT. END SUMMARY.

2. CURRENT UPDATE: DEMONSTRATION DID NOT MATERIALIZE
3 FEB. FULL COMPLEMENT OF POLICE REMAINED AROUND EMBASSY
UNTIL ROUGHLY 2000Z 3 FEB WHEN MOST DEPARTED, LEAVING ONE
VAN WITH FIVE MEN; IT AND THEY STILL HERE WHEN EMBASSY
OPENED MORNING 4 FEB. AT NOON, FEB 4 POLICE RETURNED IN
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APPROXIMATELY SAME STRENGTH AS YESTERDAY BUT HEAVY

VEHICLE NOT DEPLOYED BEHIND EMBASSY GATE.

3. WHEN POLICE RETURNED, I CALLED ABERKANE AND REQUESTED UPDATE. HIS VIEW WAS THAT POLICE'S RETURN PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE, A HANGOVER FROM YESTERDAY, AND HE PREDICTED THAT SOME MEASURES WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL POLICE SURE NOTHING AFOOT. IN RESPONSE MY QUESTION HE SAID WE SHOULD CONTINUE WITH BUSINESS AS USUAL AND I THEREFORE PLAN KEEP EMBASSY OPEN. IN ALL MY CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM, ABERKANE HAS GONE TO GREAT

LENGTHS TO ASSURE US THAT ALGERIANS TAKING EVERY NECESSARY SECURITY PRECAUTION.

4. WE PUZZLED AND DISTURBED BY 3 FEB NON-DEMONSTRATION. ABZKANE'S AGITATED PHONE CALL 3 FEB AND IMMEDIATE ARRIVAL OF 20-25 POLICE WHOSE CHIEF STATED FLATLY HE HAD BEEN ORDERED TO COME TO PROTECT EMBASSY PERSUADES US THAT ALGERIANS GENUINELY BELIEVED SOMETHING WAS IN THE WIND.

5. MOTIVATION: WE HAVE DISCUSSED VARIOUS HYPOTHESES WHICH MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY FIRST DEMONSTRATION AGAINST FOREIGN EMBASSY IN ALGIERS SINCE 1967 WOULD HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST US EMBASSY NOW. ALGERIANS DO NOT APPEAR TO BE WORKED UP ABOUT ANGOLA AND US VETO OF SECURITY COUNCIL MIDEAST VOTE GIVEN LITTLE ATTENTION HERE. SAHARA IS, OF COURSE, STRONGEST DISCERNIBLE MOTIVATION. PRESS ATTACKS HAVE REACHED NEW LEVEL OF INTENSITY AND REGIME'S PERCEIVED NEED FOR PROPAGANDA SPECTACULARS CONTINUES. HOWEVER, OUR LATEST EXPLANATIONS ON MOROCCAN REARMAMENT HAVE BEEN NOTED, AND GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CONTINUE UNDISTURBED.

6. WHAT HAPPENED FEB 3?:
FOREGOING THEORIES DO NOT EXPLAIN WHY DEMONSTRATION DID NOT TAKE PLACE FEB 3 OR WHY SITUATION CONFUSED FEB 4.
MAY BE THAT SOME ALGERIANS WANTED DEMONSTRATION AND OTHERS DID NOT. FOREIGN JOURNALIST TELLS US THAT FLN CHIEF MESSADIA WAS FURIOUS WHEN QUERIED ABOUT DEMONSTRATION FEB 3 AND SAID THAT NO SUCH EVENT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED

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AND COULD NOT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT HIS AUTHORIZATION.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT STUDENTS WITH TIME ON THEIR HANDS DURING VACATION ATTEMPTED SPONTANEOUS MEETINGS WHICH WERE NOT AUTHORIZED. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT FEB 3 NON-EVENT WAS RESULT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIXUP.

7. ONE DISTURBING THEORY, WHICH EXPLAINS SOME OTHERWISE INEXPLICABLE ASPECTS OF EPISODE, IS THAT

ALGERIANS HAD LEARNED EMBASSY WAS TO BE OBJECT OF
TERRORIST ATTACK AND THAT "DEMONSTRATION" STORY GIVEN US
IS COVER. THIS THEORY EXPLAINS: A) RELATIVELY LATE
NOTICE (12:20). B) WHY POLICE REMAINED AT
EMBASSY, UNTIL 2000, LONG AFTER ANY DEMONSTRATORS LIKELY TO
APPEAR, C) WHY FAR BACK
OF RESIDENCE GROUNDS PROTECTED AS WELL AS FRONT, D) WHY
POLICE VANS CIRCULATED CONSTANTLY THROUGHOUT AREA WITH
LIGHTS AND HORNS RUNNING FROM NOON UNTIL 2000, E) WHY
THERE WAS NEVER ANY SIGN OF DEMONSTRATORS, AND F) WHY LOCAL
AFP REPRESENTATIVE HAD REPORT OF "HOSTILITIES" AND
"HOSTAGES" AT EMBASSY-SOMEONE TIPPED HIM OFF ON BASIS OF
EXPECTATION.

8. CONCLUSION: WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED FEB 3.
ALGERIANS TOOK MATTER SERIOUSLY AND CONTINUE TO DO SO.
ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE POLICE HERE TO PROTECT US AGAINST MORE OR
LESS REGIME-DIRECTED DEMONSTRATION. HOWEVER, OUR SECURITY
POSTURE GEARED TO MEET EITHER DEMONSTRATION OR POSSIBLE
TERRORIST THREAT.
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